

# VISIONS OF THE EVENING

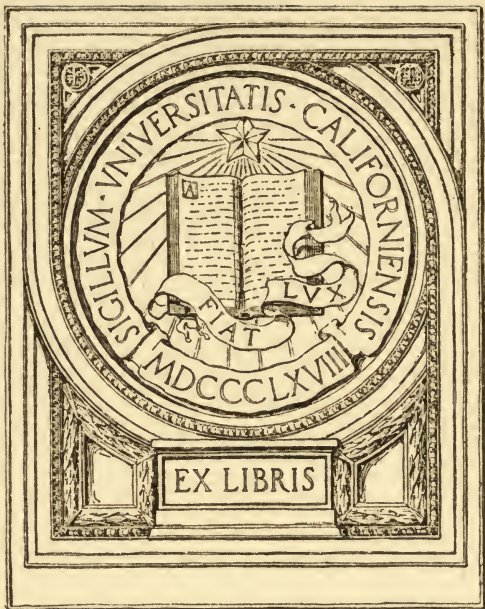
BY

JOHN G. FLETCHER

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# VISIONS OF THE EVENING

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TO THE IMMORTAL MEMORY OF  
CHARLES BAUDELAIRE

**B**AUDELAIRE, green flower that sways  
Over the morass of misery  
Painfully, for days on days,  
Till it falls, without a sigh:

Brooding bronze-wrought image that  
(Lit by a mineral fire which strains  
Upwards from a desert flat)  
Stands on hidden, noisome drains:

Laughter, mockery, and woe,  
Mingled in a moaning cry  
Which bursts out from hell below  
To the sacred Throne on high:

Rending veils that keep unseen  
God, the Maker of despair,  
Proving (lesson of life's scene!)  
That the Throne is empty there:

Bidding, in hoarse-whispered tones,  
That the great Consoler rise:  
Satan, take Thy weary ones  
Far from helpless lands and skies,

To that tomb where nothing is,  
Where no joys can do us harm,  
But the worm's soft gnawing kiss  
Keeps us faint and still and warm!

## VISIONS OF THE EVENING

Baudelaire, man's utmost sigh  
Surging, like a clarion call,  
To the Judgment held on high  
Over everyone and all :

Summoning everything to death  
Since they would not bend the knee  
Unto Lucifer, who hath  
Power over air and sea :—

Be the loadstar of my song,  
On the chilly seas of night :  
Where the lurid lamps of wrong  
Glimmer to deceive the sight :

Be the beacon of my soul  
In the night, as in the day ;—  
Let thy vast death-rhythms toll,  
Till my sorrow's borne away.

## VISIONS OF THE EVENING

### INVOCATION TO EVENING

**O** EVENING, steal into the silent city,  
And touch with your chill fingers the droop-  
ing buds  
Of all the street-lamps, touch and make them bloom,  
O Evening, make them burst in flower and sway  
Fascinated over their long palpitant reflections in  
the water ;  
Make them stand ranked on the dully smouldering  
pavement,  
Make them crouch and glimmer in long bare-  
branched parks,  
Where bowed shapes hurry homewards : make them  
gleam  
Far-off, unreal, in the haze of sunken streets,  
Where the dreamers sit immobile in the doorways  
Dreaming they have followed the sun : O make  
them flare  
And flame within the city madly, while  
You shake about them deeper darkness still,  
Till night is perfect : but do not think, O Evening,  
To light one torch within my shuttered heart.

I have seen the shadowy shapes of five thousand  
Evenings  
Brusquely or stealthily grapple with the day,  
And bear its wasted corpse into the darkness!  
I have known that millions of other wasted days  
have passed,

## VISIONS OF THE EVENING

Like a great stream, into silence ; and, I think,  
There will be millions on millions of wasted days to  
come.

O Evening, without stars to hint at dawn,  
Or fading glow to tell us of dead days :  
Grey winter Evening, that comes when toil is dead,  
And sleep is not yet born ; brief Evening made  
Of dreams and of regrets, scatter your flowers  
Over the world and let all else be vain,  
But your thin tears and the gesture of dumb despair  
Wherewith you strew the city with dim stars,  
And slowly bow your dark hair over him.

## VISIONS OF THE EVENING

### INVOCATION TO SOLITUDE

**O** SOLITUDE, evil Angel, come to me :  
The night is cold, dark, sullen : like the  
sea.

O Solitude, evil Angel, come to me.

We will speak ancient things : and you may tell  
To me of how the blest in Heaven dwell ;  
And I to you of sunsets seen in Hell.

O Solitude, evil Angel, let me kiss :  
I ask no better happiness than this.  
O Solitude, evil Angel, let me kiss.

Around our hearts, as over fires that fade,  
Silence, the old grey nurse, shall fold her plaid :  
Of faded sorrowful love and hope 'tis made.

O Solitude, evil Angel, let me sleep.  
My heart is weary : it can no more weep :  
It is a spring of sorrow frozen deep.

We will go hand in hand out towards the gloom  
Where death awaits us in his narrow room ;  
The night shall strew black poppies on our tomb.

O Solitude, evil Angel, come to me :  
My heart is bitter and sullen, like the sea.  
O Solitude, evil Angel, come to me.

## VISIONS OF THE EVENING

### INVOCATION TO NIGHT

**B**E sensual, be mysterious, O my Night :  
Let not the day end in a blaze of light,  
But overwhelm it in your ashy flood  
Slowly, as dying soldier's dripping blood.  
Be sensual, be mysterious, O my Night.

Be sensual, be mysterious, O my Night :  
Impress me heavily with your flaccid might.  
Let there be murmurs, jangled shrieks in the air,  
Raving madness, and voluptuous despair !  
Be sensual, be mysterious, O my Night.

Be sensual, be mysterious, O my Night :  
Crawl over the sky in your vast shell void of light,  
Old tortoise, for such maniacs as I,  
Who never have learned to live and cannot die.  
Be sensual, be mysterious, O my Night.

## VISIONS OF THE EVENING

### THE LOVER OF SOLITUDE.

**T**HEY falsely speak who say I live alone :  
For Solitude goes ever at my side,  
Discreet and silent, like a faithful bride.

She is so strange a marvel that no one  
To speak or treat with her has ever tried :  
Who says he saw her, tell him he has lied.

For only once we two have dared to kiss ;  
And when I lifted slowly her grey veil,  
'Twas my own shape I saw ; a marvel this.

She is so rare and tremulous and pale,  
Soon shall I bear a corpse I cannot hide  
Into the sleety stinging winter gale.

Though men may take this black corpse of my  
    bride,  
And though I never wed another one,  
They will speak false who say I sleep alone :

For Solitude sleeps ever at my side.



## VISIONS OF THE EVENING

### THE VALLEY OF KASHMIR

**T**HERE'S a valley where the sun  
    Makes brown autumn all the year :  
    Towards that valley I have gone,  
Golden valley of Kashmir. . . .

Down a slippery precipice  
    Long vines trail, like ropes of gold ;  
Far below the valley lies  
    With a stream's blue scroll unrolled.

Should you seek for me again,  
    Find me by the orange crags  
Where the ruby berries stain  
    Fields of asters blue as flags :

'Yond the gusty rainy hills,  
    'Mid the exquisite and sere  
Valley which the blue haze fills—  
    Golden valley of Kashmir. . . .

## VISIONS OF THE EVENING

### THE IRONY OF NIGHT ✓

' **G**AINST the sorrows of to-day,  
I have grimly striven to fight,  
Waiting for the summons gay  
Of the lamplit streets to-night.

Arches festooned over dark  
Led me onwards to the light :  
'Twas a dull and chilly spark  
Closed within a cage of night.

Better was the day but past :  
Then I failed but strove in might :  
Now I bind my own strength fast  
To illusions of the night.

'Tis a mockery to sleep,  
And a weariness to fight.  
Let the dark days hide me deep  
In the all-encompassing night.

## VISIONS OF THE EVENING

### TOWARDS THE IMPOSSIBLE

**I** HAVE climbed alone  
Till the gulf below is black :  
There is no turning back,  
I must needs go on.

Nor do I care if I  
Ever the top attain :  
Climbing gives no pain,  
At the top I shall die.

If I stare upon the snow  
Till I am blinded—Well,  
It is better in Hell  
To go as blind men go.

## VISIONS OF THE EVENING

### I CONTEMPLATE MY TOIL

**I** CONTEMPLATE my toil,  
Fruit of the dead years done :  
A vast unreadable coil,  
Heavy as leaden stone.

This sodden lifeless weight  
Scrawled over all with black :  
To do this was my fate?  
Better to serve the rack !

Dreaming to toss my song  
Into the roaring skies,  
I broke my back with wrong,  
And paralysed my eyes.

So now I ask but rest.  
The dream of long ago  
Is broken : on my breast  
Bury my poems, too.

## VISIONS OF THE EVENING

### VISION AFTER MIDNIGHT

**E**YES that are staring and sunken :  
    Faces pallid with sleep :  
Bodies swaying as drunken :  
    Feet that wearily creep :  
Multitude dim and tremendous,  
    Onwards you take your flight :  
Towards the last grim suburbs,  
    Black wreckage of the night !

Onward then prowl, O marauders :  
    Ebony streets unroll :  
Gold lamps set in their borders ;  
    Vast clocks over them toll !  
Onward, you dregs of the revel ;  
    To where every revel must cease :  
Death or life, God or the Devil,  
    Bring to you sorrow or peace !

On till the last one has vanished,  
    Seeking some far dawn's red :  
Then I, who from slumber am banished,  
    Am by Solitude only led.  
I stand by the sinister river  
    Which glides through the motionless town :  
And watch in the pitiless current  
    The corpses swirling down.

## VISIONS OF THE EVENING

### FUTILITY

**W**HEN I waken in the morning,  
Life seems an adventure gay :  
Ere the night, with eyes of emerald,  
Comes, I weary of the day.

In the morning I stand ready :  
Golden shines my perfect goal.  
Soon the sooty claws of sorrow,  
Seize my naked shivering soul :

I am dragged, spent and exhausted,  
Towards the rubbish-heap of grey,  
Where I wait for night to hide me,  
For I weary of the day.

## VISIONS OF THE EVENING

### MY HOURS

SOMETIMES in a sad waltz they beat :  
And then in my heart they do repeat  
The low rhythm of languorous feet.

Sometimes they walk, processions vast,  
Out of a dim and distant past,  
Panoplied, with banners massed.

Sometimes they leap and writhe and twirl,  
Like the shape of a dancing girl,  
Whom passion agitates to a frenzied whirl.

Sometimes they sleep. O dumb and deep  
Be your sleep, my hours' sleep !  
Never rise and never weep !



## VISIONS OF THE EVENING

### ANATOMY OF MYSELF ✓

**V**ESTAL withered and unkissed,  
Raphael with rheumatic wrist,  
Beautiful garment on an ape :  
Such is my poor body's shape.

Orator who rants alone,  
Sisyphus rolling still his stone,  
Sunlight shining on the blind :  
Such shall be, through life, my mind.

Titan fighting with a louse,  
Cæsar keeping herds of cows,  
Runner starting at the goal :  
Such as these is still my soul.

Emperor of desert sands,  
Don Juan in Boreal lands,  
Penniless Iscariot :  
Such, at last, must be my lot.

## VISIONS OF THE EVENING

### THE ALBATROSS

**I** SET my soul upon nothing,  
I counted all things as dross:—  
And I am desolate and weary  
As a grey albatross.

All land I left to the northward;  
And now I keep my flight  
Forever, over billows  
That change not, day nor night.

At times a reef surf-battered  
Affords me scanty stay,  
And a derelict, half-sunken,  
I once met, in my way.

Now, 'mid a sea uncharted,  
Under the Southern Cross,  
Towards the last ice-barrier,  
I move, an albatross.

## VISIONS OF THE EVENING

### THE CAGED EAGLE

**H**E sits upon his perch in the far evening :  
Motionless, watching twilight fade away.  
His wings he never rustles, he never makes  
a sound,  
He waits until the night devours the day.

And then he shuts his eyes, still poised deliberate  
Upon his perch, nor moves throughout the night,  
He dreams, before the morning brings him waking,  
That bars have vanished 'twixt him and the light.

He sits upon his perch in the fresh morning :  
Interrogating silently the sky.  
No eyelid moves, no feather, as I watch him : —  
I also know the bars more strong than I !

## VISIONS OF THE EVENING

### MISFORTUNE

**T**HESE are the vultures of evil hap :  
On the day's corpse I see  
Them leer, and squeak, and flap  
Their wings, uncannily.

These are the vultures of vain hope :  
They watch on white-walled tombs. . . .  
Towards me now they grope  
Grotesque, with tattered plumes.

These are the vultures with bald brows ;  
And I am dragged to their nest :  
Red, ragged, rent, a morsel whose  
Heart yet beats in his breast.

## VISIONS OF THE EVENING

### GOLGOTHA

**C**HRISt only once trod Golgotha :  
Christ only knew one day of woe.  
Through life I feel my agony,  
And life is slow.

Christ at the end hung on the Cross.  
But no such luck as this I have ;  
It set some boundary to His loss :  
Death will not grant the doom I crave.

Along these desert paving-stones,  
Via Dolorosa, I must wend,  
Wasting my life and wasting groans,  
But never find my journey's end.

## VISIONS OF THE EVENING

### THE DESCENT INTO HELL

**T**O suffer and be silent, that is all.  
To shut one's teeth and hold one's aching  
breath;  
To pray, but inwardly,—to pray for death :  
That is the latest fate which can befall.

To abandon every hope : and not to think,  
For thinking is but dreaming of days gone  
Foolishly thought more happy : to have done,  
And in the dark pit willingly to sink :—

This, this is wisdom : this is the reward  
Of toiling, hoping, suffering to the last.  
Time wasted—but what matter? It is past:  
I do not think my punishment is hard.

For by-and-by insanity will aid :  
Lunacy takes me from the world of men.  
One shock more, and my brain has toppled. Then  
I crave no more for light, since all is shade.

## VISIONS OF THE EVENING

### MIDNIGHT PRAYER

I AM alone, and my little light  
Yearns for the immensity of the night :  
Yet though it surrounds me, I cannot attain  
To its formless joy, free from change, free from pain ;  
To its everlasting linked dust of the stars  
Entangling my little fears and cares :  
To its deep vanity, of which I, a part,  
Am become a symbol of perverse art.

I yearn and I burn and I would not sleep :  
But thought holds me ever imprisoned deep,  
While I move, restless, and without sight,  
'Mid the vague deceits of our mortal night.  
O weary of dreams, to the sky I pray :—  
May my eyes see that darkness which is day !



## VISIONS OF THE EVENING

### REMEMBRANCES

(To Maurice Ravel)

**N**OW all my thoughts in sad array dance,  
slow  
Under the paling sky of ancient years  
And all is cypress and dark weeds of woe  
Faded and stained with long-forgotten tears.  
Tears that a mockery must be  
Of the griefs that are dead to me.

Now move my ragged hopes like mummers  
Down 'mid the marble tombs of yore,—  
Where lies the dust of the ancient summers?  
They beat upon each rusted door,  
And with a mocking cry they flee  
From those griefs that are dead to me.

Now they are dancing, slow and stately,  
In a far land of evening  
And setting sun, where briefly, lately,  
Some wrinkled serenaders sing  
Of what has been and may no more be,  
And those griefs that are dead to me.

Is all but a dream that is best forgotten  
Like those sad hours of chilly gloom  
When autumn comes and the fruit falls rotten  
On joy and woe, both hid in the tomb?  
The vain thoughts dance, the moments flee,  
And even griefs are dead to me.

## VISIONS OF THE EVENING

### THE LID

By Charles Baudelaire

(Freely Translated)

**W**HEREVER he may be, whether on sea  
or land,  
Beneath a sun of white, under a clime  
of flame,  
Servant of Jesus Christ, in Cythera's harlot-band,  
Croesus glittering in gold, beggarman without  
fame :

City or country-dweller, vagabond, sedentary,  
Whether his little brain run light or actively,  
Man everywhere submits to terror's evil fairy :  
And never looks aloft but with a trembling eye.

Above is heaven's cellar-roof that chokes ;  
A ceiling lit for comic-opera jokes  
Staged where each actor treads on bloody soil :  
The fear of libertines : the hermit's hope ;  
The sky, that black lid of that pot of soup  
Where mankind, vast, infinitesimal, boil !

## VISIONS OF THE EVENING

### ON A WINDY DAY

**M**Y heart is drunken with an old dance of  
swords,  
Played by black pipers in innumerable  
hordes,  
At dawning of a flapping, wringing day,  
Where the red rowan flares upon the grey.  
My heart is drunken with an old dance of swords.

My heart is maddened with a wild dance of war ;  
With keen blades flickering, flickering afar :  
And desperate flights heartbreaking, chill, and sore,  
Over the treeless, houseless, puddled moor :  
In the mist there go click of swords and cries of  
war :—

My heart is broken by that old dance of war.

My heart is weary of a black dance of swords :  
Far off there skirl the shrieking pipes, the hordes  
Of pipers vanish, far off over the snow.  
O, I am weary, weary, of dull woe :  
I would have done with sorrow and with words.  
My heart is weary of a black dance of swords.

## VISIONS OF THE EVENING

### WOMAN

(To J. D. Fergusson)

**L**IKE a white tower of ivory  
    Woman, the splendour of the ages, stands :  
Her robes are with gold encrusted,  
    And on her frail white hands  
Sparkle and glitter priceless pearls : —  
While about her the sunlight flickers and whirls.

Behind her, circle on circle,  
    Ringed and flowered and starred,  
    Run gorgeous tapestries, red-barred,  
And embroideries of the East,  
Rioting, a luxurious feast  
    Of every colour that the sun  
    Ever glowed or blazed upon.

In the oval opaline  
    Of her face above it all,  
    Two deep shadowed eyes enthrall  
With an air of mystery,  
    And the mouth, a crimson stain,  
    Runs like a great blot of pain.

Hieratic idol, goddess of death,  
    Stiffly weighted with the store  
    Of all earth's riches, all its ore,  
I give gladly my last breath  
    To that intoxicating glow  
    I have set around you so,  
To that nothingness I can trace,  
In the calm horror of your face.

## VISIONS OF THE EVENING

### FROM THE JAPANESE

#### I

**I** ONLY live in the light:  
Let there be light for me,  
Or let the night come soon!

#### II

Winter,—  
Summer's rainbow-mantle of colour fades  
Back, once again, to white.

#### III

I cry,  
Echo answers faintly.  
Echo is a poet.

#### IV

A breeze ruffles the rain-pool.  
—Even our griefs cannot find rest,  
Aimlessly up and down they are tossed by the wind.

#### V

Snowflakes rise and fall on the wind:  
Even Winter has her white flocks of silent birds.

#### VI

I gazed through the mist:  
Was it a goddess I saw?  
—The mist silently lifted and showed me—an open  
tomb.

## VISIONS OF THE EVENING

### FROM THE CHINESE

**T**HE lanterns dangle at the end of long wires,  
The breeze bobs them to and fro.  
My soul is in love with that lazy lantern-dance.  
Oh, how the autumn gusts through the dark gardens  
Rattle them together, rending their crimson sides!

## VISIONS OF THE EVENING

### THE MYSTIC VISION

**A**LL is night and nothing changes—what to me are grief and gladness?  
All of life that is of a moment is all of the infinite universal;  
And all of that all is but an outcry, a flicker of passing torches,  
A jingle, a step, a rustle, on the bourne of unbounded darkness:  
Seen by me the dreamer, as I dreamed of myself in a dream.  
For I, too, am but a shade, a phantom that man has created,  
I am unreal and real, and man who makes me of his substance,  
Owns no purpose but to be made anew by me in my turn.  
    In the never-ending darkness,  
    From the emptiness, through the emptiness  
    to the emptiness,  
    Which life itself creates, through which it goes and returns.



## VISIONS OF THE EVENING

### ADRIFT

**T**HE mist hangs low on the banks  
Of the northern sea,  
And the mountains in long ranks  
Stand silently :  
Out of the south to the north  
Their shadows cast,  
Facing the west, leap forth,  
To the waters glassed.

There is nor life nor grave  
On the northern sea,  
Only the bitter wave  
Apart, for me :—  
And the long mountain glades  
Where, set on high,  
A shadowy ruin fades  
Into the sky.

The fierce suns of midday  
Long have withered my heart ;  
My face is wet with the spray,  
My hands have forgotten their art.  
Now in the evening grave  
Which darkens fast,  
Grey ghosts seem to slip from each wave  
As it shudders past.

## VISIONS OF THE EVENING

### CLOUDS

**T**HESSE are the clouds which receive our  
birth and death :

These are the clouds which drink our hope  
and despair ;  
And for ever, and for ever, long as the earth has  
breath,  
The clouds shall melt away, leaving the wide sky  
bare.

These are the clouds that, when we see them aloft  
in the sky,

We no longer fear the sun's fierce monotony,  
Nor the bronze deserts of ennui, where sudden  
spasms of lust

Melt in the slumbrous starkness, like thin phantoms  
of dust :—

God has looked on the earth and has seen but the  
earth's grey shrouds,

Whirling or clashing shapes, fiery or frozen clouds.

Clouds we are, and as clouds we are drifted away,

Rising from valleys of night to vanish before the  
day.

These are the clouds that, like female desires,

Wrap in their pallid longing the stern red peak :

These are the clouds, that like the male's dumb fires,  
The gulf of the void forever and ever seek.

These are the clouds, that are weaving aloft in the  
sky

## VISIONS OF THE EVENING

Shadow and light, rain, sun and mystery,  
Earth's garments of revel, and earth's great shape-  
less shrouds :

For out of one cloud, at the last, have come all these  
clouds.

God unspeakable, God in whose hands life and death  
Are as lightning and thunder wedded, fills them with  
breath :

As a Cloud He is, as a Cloud that cannot stay,  
A pillar of fire by night, a shadowed shrine through  
the day.

## VISIONS OF THE EVENING

### THE BODY TO THE SOUL

**Y**OU are the soul and I am but the body,  
Poor soul, without experience of wayfaring,  
Helpless at life's great cross-roads, yet  
desiring  
The hard, straight upward path, not the low broad-  
curved highway.

I, body broken and bruised, hardened 'gainst hope  
and failure,  
Toiling along forever for the base husks of existence,  
For a cloak to shield me, and a bush to hide in,  
I say to you, O soul, better slumber and forget it.

Because, O soul, I know that from me you can never  
be parted:  
We are but starving vagabonds thrown together at  
the cross-roads,  
Only for tedious quarrels and slumber are we  
fashioned,  
So it must be, O soul, until life's latest instant.

Then I, body, must die nor follow the further adven-  
tures  
Of you, held back no longer from that hard upward  
pathway.  
O soul of mine! how quickly you must forget me:  
But I being dead, am of the unforgetting.

## VISIONS OF THE EVENING

### DEAD THOUGHTS

**A**S flowers smell sweeter, having been wet by  
the rain,  
So my thoughts pour forth in the damp  
still night their song :  
And the clean fresh perfume of their inextinguish-  
able pain,  
Seems to pass from the earth and to suffer no  
wrong.

And my thoughts are of mouldering poems, left half-  
unexpressed,  
Desires which I felt long ago, I know not why :  
They are crumbled to dust like flowers a long while  
pressed,  
Yet they still preserve the faint sweetness of love  
gone by.

Green gardens they filled : now they fall one by one,  
Upon the dark roads that lead ever outward far :  
The flowers of youth, green-white as a frozen star,  
The flowers of sorrow, dead ere their spring was  
done.

## VISIONS OF THE EVENING

### DAY AND NIGHT

**T**HE half of this world's story is a blank,  
For half is hidden in the gulf of night.  
No one has written and no one can write  
What happened then, how feasted, ate and drank  
Men in unechoing and empty halls  
Where to they all have wended countless years.  
How fared it there where deeds and hopes and fears  
Are but forgotten dreams with light footfalls?

We make our history and our heroes' lives  
From vast and petty notions of the day :  
How in the sunlight each man fails or thrives.  
But we forget how night and sleep betray  
Sunlight and sorrow, life and birth and death,  
To be alike vain and a waste of breath.

## VISIONS OF THE EVENING

### GREATNESS AND LITTLENESS

**H**OW many million souls, through all these  
years  
Now well-forgotten, fought their way  
through life.

And suffering, poured out sweat and blood and tears,  
Hard pressed by fate, in base or noble strife.

All these that ate each day, slept well at night,  
Ploughed field, sailed ship, reared many a lofty wall,  
Even their graves have vanished now from sight,  
To us they might have never lived at all.

So Littleness in mighty stream o'erwhelmed  
Their little stream of Might; and even They,  
Saints, Poets, Prophets, Warriors mailed and  
helmed,

Achieved how much in life during Their day?  
Because of them no pulse the faster starts:  
They too are failures, aye, and broken hearts.

## VISIONS OF THE EVENING

### THE EVERLASTING PARADOX

**N**OTHING is more than all things great.  
From the fate of chance comes the chance  
of fate :  
From the life of song comes the song of life :  
From the strife of wrong, the wrong of strife :  
From the earth the flower, from flower earth,  
From birth the power, from power birth.



## VISIONS OF THE EVENING

### DREAMS

I AM sick of the earth and of life and of days, but  
yet  
Even in sleep I cannot life forget :  
The moment hours of slumber to me come,  
Life's slave I am, but dumb ;  
The moment hours of slumber from me pass,  
I only wish I were that which I was.  
Resting at ease all powerless,  
While life shapes dreams of pain or bliss.

Bare women then I see : in them sleeps fire,  
Their flesh I do desire.  
I see drink, meat : and all I cannot taste :  
But on in dream I haste.  
I see myself asleep, then strangely gleam  
On my dream-slumbers, dreams within a dream.

So 'tis with me, and so with all men known,  
They too dream beautiful untrue dreams alone,  
For sleep has set, to mark her magic power,  
One dream within all brains at the same hour.  
Although these brains cannot communicate,  
They know and feel in each, mankind's dream-fate.  
Then, life, to endless sleep me quickly take ;  
Blest be that dream, when I dream I cannot wake.

## VISIONS OF THE EVENING

### THE SONGS OF SILENCE

**T**HESE are the songs of silence my heart keeps  
Within the city's tumult-stirring deeps :  
In the dark attentive forest the flight of a bird ;  
A low sharp flap that seems more felt than heard ;  
Or in sunlit slumbering villages the long cry  
From a pedlar's creaking cart which drowns by ;  
Or the brief rustling of the wind that fills  
With a vague movement, the low hollow-flanked  
hills ;  
Or the sudden amazement of the slithered rain  
Tossed idly by a gust upon the pane ;  
Or the broken vibrations of twilight in summer long  
Upon old streets where no one lifts a song ;  
Or anything which passes, melts or fades.  
Clouds within which, locked in dim amber shades,  
Dark thunder and pale lightning sleep embraced :  
Atmosphere's opal sea which is enchased  
With sunlight's long thin threads, blue shafts of  
rain ;  
And the distance which seems to reflect, again and  
again,  
In a twilight manner, the too-real things near by,  
These are the songs of silence from on high  
Descending to my soul, deluded one,  
And each is an angel bearing a separate sun ;  
Which blinds my eyes so that they only see  
What is unseen and what can never be :  
On solitude's veil the grey embroidery.

## VISIONS OF THE EVENING

### SUMMER SLEEP

**W**E will sleep in the high-pillared pavilions  
of late summer nights,  
Watching the mists take vague and altering  
reflections  
From the crimson lanterns, the towering tripods of  
flame,  
Set all around the hall, overflowing with golden  
lights.

We will slumber, or we will drink while the crimson-  
robed, dark-eyed dance-girls  
Weave a few wayward paces 'mid the cups and  
flowers on the floor :  
Perhaps wine, passion, idleness, pass too ; but then,  
what matter ?  
They may last for a moment, who knows ? We are  
young yet, and they are ours.

Forget then the past, 'tis a sorry song soon sung :  
Forget too the future that follows, forget that time  
moves ever on.  
Let us sleep in the high-pillared pavilions of late  
summer nights ;  
Watching the moon's blue breath on the mirror of  
the pond.

## VISIONS OF THE EVENING

### END OF THE REVEL

**T**HE torches sputter out,  
Smoke hangs about the street ;  
Now, loosely linked, a rout  
Sways by with stumbling feet.

They pass, these stragglers lost.—  
Suddenly bangs a door ;  
A sot, in gutter tossed,  
Breathes out a raucous snore.

The swaying cressets bright  
Burn through their chains : they fall,  
And black pools quench their light :  
While darkness shakes her shawl.

Out of a corner she  
Catlike begins to creep ;  
Afar, the echoes die ;  
The shadows crouch and leap.

Griefs in new strength return :  
Coldly watching our cares  
Like eyes that freeze and burn,  
Come back the lofty stars.



## VISIONS OF THE EVENING

### MY GRAVE

(June 17, 1910) ✓

**B**E my grave on the mountain side  
Where never a man goes by ;  
For of all that have lived and died,  
None strove against man as I :  
In churchyards trim and well-kept  
Sleep the cowardly mob of the mart :  
Let me sleep, as in life I slept,  
Next Nature's granite heart.

Be my ashes scattered in snow  
That has lain for a thousand years ;  
Be my flame then at last quenched. No,  
No honour for me, nor tears !  
The rain will beat through the night,  
And the wind will howl in the morn,  
Like the rhymes and cries I have torn  
From my heart with desperate might.

## VISIONS OF THE EVENING

### MY MONUMENT

(December 25, 1912)

**B**UT when I am dead long while,  
Be my monument set on the street;  
To flatter with silly smile  
The cattle that cringe and repeat  
Gossip of genius and style,  
Emotion and metrical feet:  
Be I left there the sky to defile,  
And find that idolatry sweet.

Be my corpse unburied of men:  
Be it hawked of the bookseller-tribes:  
Be it cause of long sorrow and pain:  
Be it rifled by piffling scribes!  
The rain may beat in my eyes,  
My eyes of brass, set above strife;  
But I shall blink not, nor at flies;  
For I shall have conquered—life.

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